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Henry Hastings Hall to Sarah Bracher, 2 December 1871

Mandurah Dec^r 2nd 1871

My dear Sister

I was not at all surprised to hear of Mr Bracher's demise he must have been a good age and when people are prepared for the change, as I believe he was death is a blessing — I hope you will when the affairs are settled be more comfortable for the remainder of your lives. As you begin your letter about our little boy I may tell you, he is a fine beautiful child and runs about well and is as full of mischief as a monkey — I wish he was as old as your boy. In all probability I shall not be alive to see him a man. If his mother & I are taken from him in his youth we must in faith resign him to the Father of the fatherless. If the dear little fellow lives to man's estate, my earnest prayer is that he may be a sincere christian, rather than talented learned or wealthy. I am just like you, back debts keep me down. We live very prudently, are often without a servant of any kind but debts accumulated after the fire and I am not clear of them yet, although I reduce them every year. Even with this large property our income from all sources is not £100 a year and for several years I was paying £50 a year interest. I was mixed up in two large bankruptcies and lost a good deal of money, to save myself from the like I borrowed two hundred pounds I had previously purchased 2000 acres of land under mortgage. If our affairs had prospered I should have had no difficulty in clearing it off or if Shake had not gone to the bush after we were overwhelmed by our losses by fire, he would have taken the place off my hands. I kept it for him until last year, and finding it a hopeless case, I sold Dedallah & the other land to young Sutton a nephew of the old folks who has all their property. If I had kept it longer the interest would have swallowed it up. I am still living on the place but am preparing to build a cottage on my wife's property several people about here owe me money which I cannot get, but they can supply me with material and labour — otherwise I could not build.

We have built a nice new church nearly opposite Dedallah. The Bishop consecrated it on the 25th of last month. We collected funds

formed a building Committee of which I was chairman and had no contract work — while the building was in hand it took a good deal of my time for 18 months. The Bishop gave us very great praise. The minister from Pinjarrah gives us one Sunday every month & I by appointment of the Bishop conduct the service at all other times. So you see I'm a piece of a Parson after all!

Our population is increasing very slowly — I could almost count the heads of families on my fingers — but 10 years ago there was not *one* young child in the place, now there are 50 — “and the cry is still they come”. When I build, it will be close to the scene of the fire, where the late Mr Peel lived when you were here — I am glad to hear of the doings of Bendigo people, where are the Tullocks now? Does Aunt correspond with you at all? Will you ask your esteemed husband to get me a printed form or copy of Road Board Bye-laws — I have been on the Murray Board for the last three years. Do you think you will remain at Sandhurst.

I suppose you heard of the death of poor Sam Lazenby — murdered by the natives in the Nickol Bay territory. Shake is away there now pearling — poor fellow I hope he may prosper. My wife seldom writes to any one, nor do I unless downright compelled We have no time and very little of a pleasant nature to relate We both send our love to you George Sen^r & dear Fanny and all the family.

Your ever affect brother
H H Hall

Thanks for the papers. I like the Xtian World. I will send some.